



# CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

20 OCTOBER 2022

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## (U) CALIFORNIA

### (U) Los Angeles – Authorities Seize 12,000 Suspected Fentanyl Pills at LAX

(U) Authorities seized about 12,000 pills believed to contain fentanyl that a person tried to bring in candy boxes through a security checkpoint at Los Angeles International Airport yesterday morning. Narcotics detectives and US Drug Enforcement Administration task force agents made the seizure around 7:30 am. The suspect tried to go through Transportation Security Administration screening "with several bags of candy and miscellaneous snacks with the intent of boarding a plane," deputies said. Security officers discovered that the candy boxes contained pills believed to contain fentanyl, deputies said. "The suspect fled prior to being detained by law enforcement but has been identified and the investigation is ongoing," according to the Sheriff's Department.

SOURCE: 19 October 2022, [Los Angeles Times](#)

## (U) NATIONAL

### (U) District of Columbia – US Sanctions Companies Linked to Mexican Drug Cartels

(U) Washington – The Treasury Department yesterday sanctioned a group of people and companies connected to Mexico's powerful Sinaloa drug cartel, including a sibling involved in the family-run Valenzuela drug trafficking organization. The sanctions against Juan Francisco Valenzuela and his organization, sometimes called the Valenzuela DTO, freeze all their property and other interests in the United States and bar Americans and American companies from doing business with them. Valenzuela and his siblings Jorge Alberto Valenzuela Valenzuela and Wuendi Yuridia Valenzuela Valenzuela were arrested in 2020 and 2021 as their organization was accused of importing and transporting multi-ton quantities of illicit drugs, including methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl, from Mexico to the United States. The Treasury Department said it also sanctioned Valenzuela DTO members Hector Alfonso Araujo Peralta and Raul Rivas Chaires and three Mexico-based transportation companies accused of completing transactions that contributed to the international proliferation of illicit drugs.

SOURCE: 19 October 2022, [Los Angeles Times](#)

### (U) New York – Five Russians and Two Oil Traders Charged in Global Sanctions Evasion Scheme

(U) Brooklyn – The defendants obtained military technology from US companies, smuggled millions of barrels of oil and laundered tens of millions of dollars for Russian oligarchs, sanctioned entities and the world's largest energy conglomerate. A 12-count indictment was unsealed yesterday in federal court charging five Russian nationals, Yury Orekhov, Artem Uss, Svetlana Kuzurgasheva, Timofey Telegin and Sergey Tulyakov with various charges related to a global procurement, smuggling and money laundering network. Also charged were Juan Fernando Serrano Ponce and Juan Carlos Soto, who brokered illicit oil deals for Petroleos de Venezuela S.A., the Venezuelan state-owned oil company, as part of the scheme. On 17 October 2022, Orekhov was arrested in Germany and Uss was arrested in Italy, both at the request of the United States, and will undergo extradition proceedings.

SOURCE: 19 October 2022, [US DoJ](#)

**(U) INTERNATIONAL**

**(U) China – Government Operating International Police Stations**

(U) Beijing – Beijing's law enforcement tactics beyond its borders are under scrutiny after a report revealed dozens of cities, including New York, were hosting Chinese overseas police stations. A pilot program run by the public security bureaus of Fuzhou and Qingtian counties, of coastal Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, respectively, had established 54 "overseas police service centers" across five continents, 25 cities and 21 countries as of 21 June, according to Spain-based NGO Safeguard Defenders. The overseas service stations were created in the name of combating transnational crime, especially telecommunications fraud, which has already seen the arrest of a large number of Chinese nationals living abroad. Their stated tasks also include the provision of administrative services, such as the renewal of Chinese driver's licenses, the report said. In the United States, the report's open-source data indicated one such service center in New York City. In Canada, three were established in Toronto. A more concerning factor of Chinese police operations on foreign soil, however, is Beijing's targeting of political dissenters and others likely to be subject to persecution once "persuaded" to return home, said the NGO.

SOURCE: 19 October 2022, [Newsweek](#)

**(U) France – Interpol Busts Cyber-Fraud Crime Syndicate**

(U) Lyon – Interpol arrested 75 suspected members of the Black Axe West African crime syndicate and intercepted over \$1 million in various bank accounts as part of a wide-ranging multi-country operation aimed at thwarting the group's cyber-fraud efforts that fund its criminal operations. According to the international police agency, Operation Jackal spanned 14 countries on four continents targeting Black Axe and related crime groups in the region. Law enforcement officials raided 49 properties and seized what Interpol called an "immense quantity of assets" – including 12,000 SIM cards – that spawned investigative leads that have potentially identified 70 more suspects. The agency said that Black Axe and the other groups are responsible for most of the cyber-enabled financial fraud around the globe. Black Axe took root in Nigeria in 1977 and over the decades, members have been accused of myriad crimes, including murder. The group, which has a cult-like reputation, has been a target of US law enforcement.

SOURCE: 17 October 2022, [The Register](#)

**(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.**

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